

The Magnificent Seven

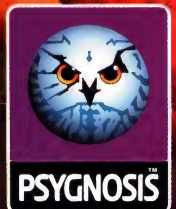
We unveil the hottest autumn & winter releases from Psygnosis



PRESENTED FREE WITH THE
OCTOBER '98 EDITION OF PCZONE

FEATURING:

**DRAKAN: ORDER OF THE FLAME • O.D.T.
GLOBAL DOMINATION • PRO 18: WORLD TOUR GOLF
LANDER • TELLURIAN DEFENCE • NEWMAN HAAS RACING**



O.D.T.



NEWMAN HAAS RACING



DRAKAN:
ORDER OF THE FLAME



TELLURIAN DEFENCE



PRO 18: WORLD TOUR GOLF



LANDER



GLOBAL DOMINATION

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SPECIAL THANKS TO Gary and Jonathan @ PSYGNOSIS

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DRAKAN: ORDER OF THE FLAME

Look out Lara, there's a new busty heroine on the block – and she's got a pet dragon to play with. **Jeremy Wells** picks up his magic wand and goes in search of elves, hobgoblins and 3D accelerated wonder bras



It's 3D accelerator only, so expect plenty of cool graphical effects. Just check out those transparent wings.

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Surreal Software
PUBLISHER Psygnosis
WEBSITE www.drakan.com
OUT January '99

Okay – let's get it straight out of the way shall we? The lead character in Psygnosis' *Drakan: Order of the Flame* is a feisty young lass named Rynn who obviously shops in the same boutiques as TV's *Xena: Warrior Princess* and yes, she does have an unfeasibly large chest.

No, Russ Meyer has got absolutely nothing to do with the game's development and yes, comparisons will obviously be made with *Tomb Raider*'s Lara Croft. But let's face it, if you're going to spend an unhealthy portion of your life watching the

character you're controlling leap and dart about the screen, she might as well be fully stacked. I mean, who wants to stare for hours on end at a lead character that makes Cathy Burke look cute, with a chest that conjures up images of two aspirins on an ironing board? Why do you think *Quake* is a first-person game? Who wants to look at a square-jawed Marine all day? Do you really think *Tomb Raider* would have been half as successful if the lead character was an ageing dinner lady with more facial hair than Rasputin? No. And that's why *Drakan*'s lead character looks like she does. Just live with it, 'kay?

Right then, back to business. *Drakan* is a 3D action/adventure game which borrows elements from traditional role playing games, the Sega Saturn 'smash' hit *Panzer Dragoon* and of course

Tomb Raider. You assume the character of Rynn, an agile combatant who has awoken from a night out on the mediaeval town to find that her brother has been kidnapped. Using only her wits, about fifty different weapons and the help of her faithful sidekick Arokh (a bloody great fire-breathing dragon), you must safely guide her through five different worlds stretching over

15 vast levels which are in turn, packed with over 20 different types of adversary – ranging from towering giants to lurking undead and rescue her sibling. Sounds simple, doesn't it?

Except that when you start the game, you know nothing – maybe it's something to do with all the alcohol you drank last night, who knows? You wake up with a sore head, your mouth feels hairier

than a gorilla's arse and to top it all off, you've gone and laddered your tights. Have you any idea how hard it is to get hold of a pair of opaque 15 denier in Fantasyland? After taking your frustration out on a few Wartoks and checking that your double parked dragon hasn't been clamped you stumble off to a rather quaint looking log cabin to see a man about a quest. "From the start *Drakan* has been a character-based game," maintains Alan Patmore, lead designer of the game and CEO of US based developers Surreal Software. "The story and character development is a vital part of the gameplay and each character has been carefully designed to evolve through the course of the game. When the game begins, you've just woken up after having passed out after



Rynn can walk, run, swim, climb and slide. She can also use magic. Cool!



Flying Arokh is easy – he can also breath fire, which comes in handy...



...as in this case. Anyway Rynn's now miffed 'cos she forgot her crumpets.



Rynn starts off with just the basic adventurin' kit – a sword, a g-string and leather armour. As you progress through the game you'll find better goodies.



Hand to hand combat is in the beat 'em up style. Rynn can use up to 50 different weapons and pull off some pretty complex combo moves. Move over Lara – there's a new chick on the block.

taking part in a drinking contest. Everybody in your village has been slaughtered and your brother has been kidnapped. You don't know what the hell is going on, but that's part of the challenge. That's what the game is all about. Finding out what you've got to do next, and working out how to do it."

Since you can't actually talk to other characters you meet in the game, this is by no means an easy task. Exactly how are you supposed to find out what you're meant to be doing if you can't actually speak to the other characters in the game? "Well the way the game progresses is actually like a movie or novel," explains Patmore. "The more you play, the more the story is opened up to you. You start the game after the intro cut-scene which explains what has happened.

From that point on, the story unfolds during actual gameplay. As you progress and interact with the NPCs (non-playing characters) in the game, more quests and sub-quests will be revealed to you. When you reach certain points in the game our STOMP or real-time cut-scene technology if you prefer, will cut in and explain the plot further. By keeping it in it allows us to tell a complex story without actually pulling the player away from the game."

So what exactly is this STOMP technology thing and how does it work? "It allows the designer to take control of anything in the game environment, including the characters and the camera – and this is how we introduce all of the main quests of the game" explains Patmore. "Sub-quests can be given by an NPC, but they can also be stumbled upon. The

player might find a locked chest hidden in a remote area of the level. Rynn's quest log will then contain "Find key for chest in Wartok base". Sub-quests also come in the form of books, scrolls and maps that the player can find and read. At one point, Rynn will find the map to an ancient sword inside a thief's base in the tropical world. To get the sword, Rynn must first find the island where it is hidden and then try to overcome a series of traps and puzzles in order to gain the item. Books and scrolls are also used for hints and foreshadowing."

And what exactly would an average sub-quest entail? Do you have to do everything you're told to finish the game? "Not necessarily," grins Patmore. "An example might be that a farmer will tell Rynn that he will give her a map and a magic sword if she

kills all the spiders in his cave. Rynn must then enter the cave and figure out how to kill all the spiders. To do this she may need to solve a couple of puzzles and engage in a lot of combat. A typical sub-quest like this would take the average player around half an hour to complete and there might be as many as six or seven in any given level. You don't have to complete each one, but you might find it easier going later on in the game if you do."

DON'T THEY UMM, GET IN THE WAY?

Okay, so maybe you could have been excused for thinking that *Drakan* is yet another 3D platform game in the mould of *Tomb Raider*. So now you know that there's less focus on gymnastics and more on character development and exploration. But

what about combat? Rynn has got up to fifty different weapons at her disposal at different points in the game, not to mention a dragon. Is she some kind of pussy, or what?

"Well, err no" smirks Patmore. "It's actually quite a tough design issue. We have four



Wartoks – they're not pretty, they fart a lot but they do have AI.



Levels are large and varied. One minute you're gliding through a rocky ravine, the next you're underground slaughtering spiders.



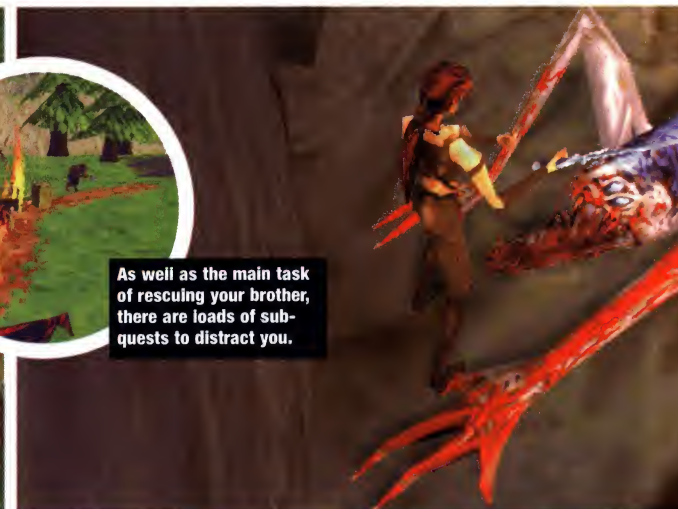
Dogfights are for dogs... Only dragons er... 'dragfight'.



You can lop off limbs, but *NO* you can't use them as weapons.



Arokh defends himself when Rynn isn't with him. Apparently he doesn't have much time for strangers.



As well as the main task of rescuing your brother, there are loads of sub-quests to distract you.

Character control is quick and easy thanks to a responsive mouse/keyboard set-up.

← types of combat scenarios: ground to ground, air to ground, ground to air and air to air. We've designed certain areas of the environments specifically for certain combat scenarios. For example, in level two you'll fly down a canyon that is specifically designed for air to ground combat. First we tackled and perfected the dragon flight model. We created the flight model to be highly intuitive so that first-timers would immediately feel comfortable flying. That's not to say that our engine doesn't have the potential for depth. We've spent ages playtesting and tweaking. Believe me, the dragon may be easy to fly, but it's difficult to master."

"Rynn was a second challenge. We wanted to use the same controls as the dragon so that the transition from ground to air was as seamless as possible. For ground combat we wanted to focus on Rynn's speed, dexterity and weapon skill. We manged to

accomplish this by providing her with a wide array of defensive moves such as backflips, cartwheels and rolls – you can't just steam in there and not expect to get hurt. You've got to think about where a creature's weak spot might be. Suss out his Achilles heel. We also wanted all of the hand-to-hand combat to be both fast and intricate. So we've given Rynn combo moves and special attacks. Our aim was to make it like an arcade beat 'em up, but then mix it up a bit by adding different weapons, swords and battle axes and the odd magical weapon. Obviously certain weapons work better against different enemies, so there's a bit of strategy in there too. You can even hold a different weapon in each hand. It works pretty well."

So Rynn is quite clearly not a chick to be messed with. But what kind of foe is she likely to come up against in the game?

"There are 18 different

enemies, with five bosses" maintains Patmore. "Our tools allow each to be tweaked individually. Each enemy has a set AI (artificial intelligence) for his character. For example, Wartoks use Wartok AI, Giants use Giant AI and so on and so forth. These parameters allow the designers to

"The primitive Giant has the coolest AI so far. He picks up anything around him and throws it at you – including any body parts lying around"

ALAN PATMORE, LEAD DESIGNER AND CEO OF SURREAL SOFTWARE

customise the behaviour of each creature in the game environment. I can make one troll flee when he notices the dragon, another might run to a ballista, or yet another will run and alert the other



Arachniphobes – be very scared!

Wartoks when he sees Rynn coming. The coolest AI so far though has to be the primitive Giant. He picks up anything and everything around him and throws it at you – and that includes any creatures or body parts that are lying around."

So what happens when Rynn

is off fighting Wartoks on foot? Does Arokh get seven shades of dragon shite kicked out of him if the player doesn't keep a keen eye on him?

"Well no" says Patmore, looking slightly alarmed. "The dragon will defend himself when separated from Rynn. He will bite any creatures that come within X distance of

him. Arokh doesn't act independently of Rynn in any other way though. When Rynn and Arokh do part, Arokh doesn't start flying around killing things and solving puzzles."

Obviously though, one of the biggest pulling points of the game is the fact that you can just hop onto this dragon and fly pretty much anywhere. Doesn't this freedom make things just a little bit difficult design-wise?

"You bet. The player's ability to jump on the dragon and fly around anywhere at anytime was a very difficult design obstacle. Most of the puzzle-based environmental action occurs when you're separated from the dragon however. We needed a logical way to get the player off the dragon and we accomplished this by creating what we call 'plugs', natural 3D obstacles that prevent the dragon from entering certain areas. Plugs usually come in the form of doors, cracks in walls or gates that the dragon



Character animation is super smooth thanks to a new single-skin skeletal technology, they don't tear or break up.



There are 15 levels in all, stretching over five different environments.

cannot physically penetrate. Rynn is obviously much smaller and can enter these areas."

"We've actually done the reverse to encourage you to use the dragon. For example, you'll need Arokh to access some key areas and he's obviously got some significant fire-power which will sometimes be advantageous against hordes of land-based enemies. The separation of the dragon and Rynn actually plays a prominent role in the story and game flow. About three quarters of the way through the game, Succubi will capture Arokh and the player must retrace their steps on foot. They'll pass through areas that they have already explored in the sky in order to infiltrate Succubi's lair. The whole play balancing thing is very important."

THE PRICE OF PERFECTION

There should by now be little doubt in your mind that *Drakan* does indeed look the business

and any intelligent or discerning punter out there should be gagging to get your hands on Rynn's charms. But hang on a minute – every silver lining has a cloud. Yep, you've guessed it, if you want to play *Drakan* when it's released early next year, you're going to need a 3D accelerator card so if you haven't got one, best you put a 3Dfx card at the top of your Christmas list right now. *Drakan* is undoubtedly a good-looking game, but aren't Surreal Software being a little bit presumptuous assuming everyone has got the kit to run it?

"I don't think so" argues Patmore. "If you want to play leading edge games that use the latest technology you've got to have a pretty high spec machine. *Drakan* is a hardware only title which means that our minimum spec is a Voodoo 1 card or one of similar performance. Focusing on hardware allows us to concentrate on implementing next generation technologies for

second generation cards. Multipass texturing and bump mapping will be supported for cards that can handle it. Obviously, the second generation cards can handle many more polygons than the first generation cards and we're taking advantage of this by making the engine scalable. This means that you can customise your graphics settings to suit your machine's CPU speed and hardware configuration. If you have a P500 with two Voodoo 2's you will be able to increase the viewable area and set texture and model detail to the highest possible setting. At the same time we intend to make it playable on a P166 with 16Mb of RAM and a 3D accelerator card."

Admit it. It all sounds pretty impressive, doesn't it? If Surreal Software can live up to the massive goals they've set themselves, it looks as though we could be in for a real treat come the new year. Here's hoping. [M]

There are times when even a Scavenger like this needs a good manicure.



A FORMIDABLE PAIR

Starsky and Hutch. Bodie and Doyle. Batman and Robin. Winnie the Pooh and Christopher Robin. Some of fiction's greatest dynamic duos (*Are you sure about those last two? - Ed*). Now there's a new pair (...ahem) to help in the eternal struggle against all things evil.

RYNN

Busty, leather-clad Rynn is a warrior who likes nothing better than a good old-fashioned scrap. She is lithe and athletic, relying on her speed and agility to manoeuvre her around her opponents rather than brute strength – but that's not to say she's a wuss.

Approximately 150 individual animations help to make up Rynn's repertoire of movements including simultaneous lower and upper body movements. She can do combination moves, such as running and attacking or jumping and turning while slashing at enemies. She also swims, climbs ladders and slides.

Thanks to a new advanced single-skin skeletal animation system, her body and movement is super smooth and ultra-realistic. She can use a variety of weapons as well as magic and when she gets time off she likes nothing more than hanging around bars fighting sailors with her pet dragon, Arokh in tow. Her hobbies include arm-wrestling, making thongs from rabbit pelts, shaving her bikini line and plucking her eyebrows. Oh, and collecting and pressing wild flowers.

Once she retires from adventuring, Rynn wants to travel the world and help old people and animals. Probably...



Rynn – smooth, and sexy with top curves.

AROKH

Scaley, big and smelly, Arokh is a living legend with a remarkable talent for local history and pub quizzes (due in part to the fact that he's been alive for centuries). Best chums with Rynn, he has a wry sense of humour and possesses the unique ability to take on new destructive attacks from those he slays – apparently the energy flows into his body upon their defeat – although few can claim to have seen this happen.

A formidable opponent in the air – yep, he can fly with the best – he breathes fire and is known to dabble in magic. In fact, some of his card tricks are said to be very worthwhile, though lately he's been forced to give up the pub circuit as during a nasty cold, he toasted a couple of audiences.

Simple to fly, but difficult to master, Arokh is nippy around town, but remains suitable for long journeys with a cruising speed around 40 mph. Currently available only as a convertible, he won't rust but prefers to be garaged when not in use. No alarm system is fitted, but insurance premiums are kept low because although he eats up miles, he also eats up any joyriders who get too close.

Although there are plenty of years left in the old dog, when he eventually retires, Arokh would like to realise his ambition to become a professional Connect Four player and represent his local village at county level.



Arokh – not curvey. In fact, a bit barbed.



Shockwaves!
Lights! Smoke!
It's a computer
game! Wow!



Stop waving that torch about...Ouch. Ouch. Ouch. Ouch. Ouch. Ouch. Ouch. Ouch.

Check him out. Thinks he's mister Big Stuff. The arse.



Take that, you nasty little monster.



Each level has its own environmental style: this one's all 'medieval'.



Run! It's the Creature from the Black Lagoon!



Not another "find the missing
bits from the giant fresh pasta
making machine" quest.

**“[O.D.T.] brings to the
action adventure
genre, unparalleled
character control...
character management,
hand-to-hand
combat, weapons
and spells”**

Check out the incredibly
impressive whiplash laser
beam thing. As seen on
BBC TV's *Watchdog*.

O.D.T.



Now *that* is an unnecessarily large weapon, young lad.

It's a new 3D action spectacular from La Belle France. It's got heroes, weapons, puzzles, and lots of magic spells. Oh, and a stupid name. Who's down with *O.D.T.*? **Charlie Brooker, naturellement**

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Psygnosis, Paris
PUBLISHER Psygnosis
WEBSITE www.psygnosis.com
OUT October '98

Paris. Ahhhh, Paris. It's the most romantic city in the world, you know. Assuming you ignore the ever-present aroma of stale urine, the graffiti, the surly and unhelpful locals, the soaring crime rate, the pollution, the prostitutes, the exorbitant price of a cup of coffee, the pushy pre-teen beggars who hang around the Eiffel Tower harassing tourists, the claustrophobic Metro system, the appalling driving conditions at the Arc de Triomphe, the absurd hotel rates, the pathetic US teenagers making a pilgrimage to the grave of fat dead overrated rockswat Jim Morrison, the ridiculous opening hours, the abusive and pushy police force, the seedy drinking holes, the racism, the incomprehensible ring road system, the constant threat of terrorism, the abysmal public toilets, and the generally hateful nature of France itself, that is.

With the bitter reality of Paris so far removed from the romantic

ideal, it's not surprising to find so many programmers intent on creating alternative realms of fantasy in which to lose themselves. Case in point: Psygnosis' Paris Studio, where the team are currently hard at work putting the finishing touches to *O.D.T.*, a third-person 3D adventure game that promises to push back the boundaries of, you know, stuff. As is the tradition with games a la Français, *O.D.T.* is a decidedly weird creation.

But before we start explaining the ins and outs of the game proper to you, we'll tackle that title. *O.D.T.*. Depending on who you believe, it either stands for *Or Die Trying*, or is French shorthand for the word 'oddity'. We prefer our very own, utterly fabricated explanation, which stands for *Overeager Dog's Tongue*, because the game was originally designed as a sick bestiality simulator. That's a lie, by the way. Forgive us and keep reading.

AIR PUNCH CULT BLOODLUST

We know what you're thinking. You're thinking "this looks a bit like *Tomb Raider* or something." And in a way you'd be right: the team make no bones about the fact that they've been influenced by Core's hyper-successful

platform spectacular. But this isn't a pallid rehash: there's more to *O.D.T.* than that. For starters, the game is far more action-oriented than you might suspect. Alongside the aforementioned *Tomb Raider*, the team cite non-stop action shoot 'em ups such as *Loaded* and *The Chaos Engine* as influences. And you know what that means: mucho blood-letting. Enough death and violence to leave you punching the air in an interminable psychotic frenzy, staring blankly forward into nihilistic oblivion, chanting "*O.D.T., O.D.T.*" over and over again like a freshly-brainwashed disciple of some sinister occult movement. ...Probably.

Still, slaughter there may be – but at least it's not *meaningless* slaughter. There *is* a storyline, which runs through the game like a spinal column through a bison, holding it together in much the same fashion. Just throw down

some cushions, take a seat, and we'll explain.

PEARL SHIP PILE CREAM

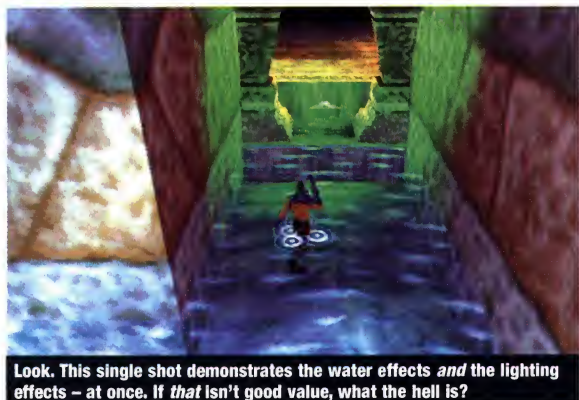
Ahem. Once upon a time in the future there was an unutterably delightful planet known as Tonantzin, which sounds like the name of a haemorrhoid cream laced with bottom-soothing

chemicals or something. But isn't. The jewel in Tonantzin's crown was a city known as Calli, which sounds rather like the name of a city in a contrived and largely meaningless science fiction story. And is.

Anyway, Calli is in trouble. Big trouble. And not just because it's got a rubbish name, either. No.



Each level has been constructed in virtual cyberspace by a team of invisible men with computer spanners.



Look. This single shot demonstrates the water effects *and* the lighting effects – at once. If *that* isn't good value, what the hell is?



Ooh. A *Tomb Raider* type interlude.



On the right: a teleporter. On the left: some wooden beams. In the middle: you.



Pool! Have you seen a dentist recently, your breath positively stinks, old boy.



"Goddamn cheap Taiwanese lighters", cursed Brad, as his charred fingers dropped to the floor.



Rumours that Julia Chase is to join the cast of *Grange Hill* are sadly unfounded.



"Helloooo, can I have my ball back please?"



Some carnage yesterday.

Calli's people are sick. Not sick in a "biting the legs off hamsters and grinning while the blood runs down your chin and the poor creature's furry carcass twitches gruesomely in your hand" kind of way, but in a "coughing phlegm and bile down your shirt before falling over, convulsing for a few hours and dying" kind of way instead, and that's far less fun (unless you're a hamster). They're blighted by a mysterious epidemic. Why? Nobody knows. That's part of the plot, stupid: you've got to find out.

Faced with a terrifying plague, the authorities have hit upon a brilliant plan. They'll use the powers of the legendary Green Pearl to eradicate the disease and return the city to its former rude

health. This is where the plot starts to get a bit vague and stupid: according to the promotional bump "nobody remembers the origin of the Green Pearl but its beneficial powers have been known for centuries."

Still, at least they know where it is: on board a flying ship, the *Nautiflyus*, which is racing toward Calli at a fair rate of knots. Phew.

Then something terrible happens. The ship goes down. It doesn't *crash*, it gets yanked out of the sky by "a mysterious force". But instead of getting smashed into a million million tiny pieces on the ground, it comes to a halt atop a tower in the middle of an area known only as "the forbidden zone".

Yes. "The Forbidden Zone". You only find areas with names like that in stories. In real life, they've got names like "Doncaster", "Banbury", or "Didcot". You know. Shitholes.

FUEL BISCUIT SEARCH SECTOR

No computer game storyline is complete without an excuse to whittle the number of heroic protagonists down to one (played, naturally, by *you*, Mister Player Sir), and *O.D.T.* is no exception. While everyone else sits around repairing the craft, you get sent out to explore the tower in search of fuel. Naturally, you're not going to find some hidden inside a cupboard two yards from the *Nautiflyus*. No. You're going to

have to hunt high and low for it instead, and therein lies the game. Ah, yes. The game itself. *O.D.T.* is big. Huge. Massive. If it was a

"There's a lot of violent action, plus puzzles to solve, incredible environments to explore and realistic characters to manage"

JEAN BAPTISTE-BOLCATO,
O.D.T. PRODUCER, PSYGNOSIS

sponge biscuit, it'd actually be a cake (if you see what we mean). There are eight separate stages

(one for each conveniently-separated section of the Forbidden Zone tower), and these in turn are split into over 75 individual sectors. Each stage is crammed to the arse-pixels with enemies (some of which are too huge to readily comprehend), unique environment graphics, and puzzles (which, we're told, will be decidedly more complex than the usual bog-standard "find the key for the door" yawn-a-thons).

And there are weapons and combat styles to master: each character (four to start with, further hidden characters become available as you progress) has their own unique style of attack and a varied arsenal at their disposal: everything from lo-fi blobby lightguns to full-on



JEAN BAPTISTE-BOLCATO

Jean-Baptiste Bolcato (28) has been working at Psygnosis for 3 years. Producer on Adidas Power Soccer International 97, he is now the producer on O.D.T.. He lives in Paris, which is in France. At weekends he dresses as a bear and chases children into canals. Not really.

PCZ Hey, Garlic Nose: describe *O.D.T.* in 100 words, please.

JEAN *O.D.T.* is graphically very stunning, utilises state-of-the-art technology, and is a mix of the best qualities of a good shoot 'em up and an RPG/adventure game. There's a lot of violent action, plus puzzles to solve, incredible environments to explore and realistic characters to manage. The game also follows a narrative chronology that has rarely been developed like this in games of this kind. (*That's only 63 words – Pedantic Word Counting Bastard Ed.*)

PCZ What's going to be the best bit of the game, Monsieur Snail-Gobbler?

JEAN 3D engine, smoothness of character and enemy movements, sharp graphics, stunning weapons & spells and bloody action.

PCZ So you won the World Cup. You were lucky. But why should anyone care about *O.D.T.*, Frenchie?

JEAN Every action adventure gamer could name a game that has taken over their lives and become a real passion. But no matter how excellent the game there are always a few nagging doubts about "it would be perfect if it had this... or if I could do this..." *O.D.T.* answers those "if only" scenarios. It brings to the action adventure genre unparalleled character control through its motion capture technology; character management; hand-to-hand combat, weapons and spells, strategic puzzle solving and finally a beautiful, immersive environment.

PCZ Traditionally most PC games are developed in America or England. Is there a large talent pool of game developers available in France, and do you find that being "off the beaten path" is an obstacle or an advantage, you great big pain au chocolat, you?

JEAN We actually do not consider ourselves to be in any way "off the beaten path" of development. Some of the best games have been developed in France such as last year's PlayStation hit *V-Rally*. And let's not forget *Rayman*, and *F1 Racing* by Ubisoft. The pool of talented developers is definitely comparable to that in any other country – as is the pool of core gamers. Let's not forget that we are gamers first and foremost. Besides, we are part of Psygnosis, who have a huge development structure with studios all over the world, including San Francisco. As one company, we share all of our development knowledge – which is significant!

PCZ *O.D.T.* is being touted as having a dark and violent atmosphere. Violent video games are a constant source of controversy. How is violence portrayed in the game, and are you concerned about it? Did you ever consider toning it down, huh, baguette-face?

JEAN There is no denying that *O.D.T.* does get quite violent and blood is splattered with the player having the option of battling their enemies through hand-to-hand, weapon or magic combat. With the weapons alone, the player can fry, electrocute, shoot or nuke their opponents. However, it's also important to understand that there is a lot more to the game than just violent conflicts. There are huge levels to explore, puzzles to solve and careful character management to achieve.

THINGS *O.D.T.* COULD STAND FOR, BUT DOESN'T

*Oh Do Tell
On Deadly Turf
Orangutan Dental Torture
Orgiastic Decimation Time
Oak Dining Table
Old Droopy Tits
Officer Damien Tossenpiss
Out, Damned Tot!
Odourless Danish Toilettries
Oi! Dinner Time!*



This *IS* the green room yeah? So where's all the free booze and peanuts?



Every character in the game is sketched out in loving detail prior to production. This, unsurprisingly, is one of the bad guys.



A great deal of care and attention has gone into every single pixel of the game.

nuclear-style missile assaults. Lovely. Just like in *Rosie and Jim*. And there are magic spells to discover too: each hero can draw on a range of bizarre otherworldly conjurations whenever the situation gets *really* tight. It's all a little bit *Gauntlet*, isn't it?

As you can tell by gawping at the screenshots like the boggle-eyed chimp you are, the visuals hit the spot. What you *can't* see, since we haven't perfected moving-screenshot technology *just yet*, is the ultra-slick animation, which is brought to you via the magic of motion capture. Most of the *O.D.T.* team cut their teeth producing *Adidas Power Soccer* for the PlayStation, a process which required extensive use of the very latest in

motion capture technology: as a result, they're experts. The end result is that each of the four playable characters has enough acrobatic manoeuvres to put Lara Croft – or indeed most *real people*, if, spodyboy, you can still remember what real people look like – to shame.

Just as well the cast of heroes is so malleable, because the enemies are too. Not only do the in-game foes react intelligently to your actions, the team have even managed to program in some "Artificial Stupidity" routines for good measure. We're not joking; they really have. What it means, in effect, is that the enemies proved to be just too damned smart to make combat any fun – the team had to *force* them to make some

mistakes. This is a powerful demonstration of the formidable AI routines at work in the code – and it has the added advantage of making the opponents seem curiously more 'lifelike'... in a human, fallible and endearing sort of way, naturally.

NANOSECOND PERUSAL DEAL

All in all, it looks like a laugh: part *Tomb Raider*, part *Gauntlet*, and with far better visuals than the pair of them put together. Expect the final game to touch down on a shelf near you some time around November. We shall, of course, cover the whole thing in deep and exhilarating detail the nanosecond that we get our claws into a totally finished copy. Kay? Kay. [K2]

GLOBAL DOMINATION

Megalomaniacs of the world rejoice! Finally a strategy game of truly global proportions. **Paul Presley** gets himself in a spin



This is the game's main screen. A fully rotating globe that can be zoomed in or out as far as you want.

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Psygnosis, Leeds
PUBLISHER Psygnosis
WEBSITE www.psygnosis.com
OUT October '98

The words 'memorable moments' and 'Never Say Never Again' don't really belong in the same sentence. Most 007 fans tend to agree that the film was a minor blip in the career of the birding, boozing and brawling secret agent, even if it did return Sean Connery to the role. However, one scene in the film did leave a lasting impression in the minds of youthful teens across the country, and I'm not talking about the sight of Kim Basinger in a swimsuit (*Although it'd probably be better for your reputation if you were - Ed.*). It's the moment when Bond sits at a table in a crowded party, grasps a joystick and starts playing a computer game against

the absurdly evil Klaus Maria Brandauer. The reason I mention this is because Psygnosis' new strategy title, *Global Domination*, owes a lot to the fast-moving war game that Bond dabbled with, even without the electrified joystick (although with today's Force Feedback controllers, who knows what's possible?)

It also owes a fair bit to the classic trackball arcade game *Missile Command*, although with a much stronger, *Risk*-style strategic element. So what exactly is producer Phil Quirke-Webster trying to create here? "It's a strategy 3D arcade combat shoot 'em up," he explains. "This may seem like a contradiction in terms, but we've set it up to appeal to as wide a range of the gaming public as possible. It's in a completely different genre to anything that has gone before. We're hoping that *Global Domination* will appeal to two very distinct markets. Firstly, the

strategists, who like to deal with very deep resource management. And secondly, the fast and furious arcade gamers who are just after a good blast."

Thankfully, the concept is a simple one. The Earth is at war and you can attack any part of it with any weapon at your disposal.

"My thought has always been that film people shouldn't make games and games people shouldn't make films..."

There's a deeper story line naturally, dealing with life in the year 2015, your role as a conflict trouble-shooter and a band of new wave terrorists called W.O.E., the World Order Enterprise (close allies of M.I.S.E.R.Y. - Militaristic Individuals for the Systematic Eradication of Religious Yoke, and D.E.S.P.A.I.R. - the Destruction of Earth Societies, er, Promising Anti-Intellectual, um, Research).

You begin by controlling one country at a time, sorting out 'local' difficulties, and gradually work your way up through the ranks until you control the majority of the Earth's military forces. "Some games might try to limit you to small theatres of war or stop you from leaving a certain

lights and noise. The gaming equivalent of dropping a tab of acid at a 70's disco. Here though, the aesthetic confusion soon becomes clear as you get used to the controls, the mesh of noise gives way to separate attack warnings and audio cues. Before long you've come to terms with its style and interface and find yourself drawn to it like a moth to a flame. "The game will be a complete sensory bombardment," boasts Quirke-Webster, somewhat smugly.

At your disposal are weapons of all shapes and sizes. Troops of every kind, from naval to airborne to orbiting. Missiles tipped with conventional, chemical and even nuclear warheads are a mere button press away. And, of course, at the enemy's disposal too. Which is where the AI (Artificial Intelligence) comes into play. "We have several AI experts in the office, including one who has a doctorate in Artificial Intelligence,"

PHIL QUIRKE-WEBSTER, PRODUCER

area," maintains Quirke-Webster. "Not in *Global Domination*. Here you can go anywhere and do anything you fancy to any nation you want. They'll probably not like it much, take offence at your actions and strike against you."

SOUND AND FURY

The game first appears rather confusing. A frantically spinning globe. A cacophony of colour,

Global Domination



FMV sequences are very professional, integrated seamlessly and helps to keep you up to date on the global picture.

Throughout *Global Domination*, rendered animation sequences like these are used to highlight your actions and keep you informed as to what's happening.

LANDER

Charlie Brooker can't even drive a car. God only knows what he'll make of the Psygnosis re-make of everyone's favourite lunar lander

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Psygnosis, Manchester
PUBLISHER Psygnosis
WEBSITE www.psygnosis.com
OUT November '98

So you've played a few space games. Now you think you're a hotshot pilot. You think you're soddling Buck Rogers. You'd suppose that if for some bizarre reason you were transported through time, way into the future, into the midst of some immense inter-galactic dogfight, that you'd be able to hold your own. You picture yourself swooping through the cavernous majesty of space, corkscrewing round the rings of Saturn, dodging meteors, and cutting a swathe through legion after legion of dark metallic Cylon spaceships. And perhaps it really *would* be like that. At least for a little while.

But the moment you try to land on a planet, you're screwed. Sod any attempts to 'use the force' – the only 'force' here is the force of gravity – and it isn't on your side. Piloting a bulky craft over a landscape and through the

gravitational pull of an immense planet and aided by countless mini-jets is a different kettle of fish to zipping around in freespace. Let's face it, without some experience, you're more like Norman Wisdom than Han Solo. Suddenly you've got the starring role in *Reverse Thrust*, *Mister Grimsdale*! You'll crash like an idiot and blub like a child. If only you'd tried your hand at *Lander* – the game that teaches you just how *ratbastard hard* flying a spacecraft would actually be – you'd still be alive.

WHERE IT COMES FROM

Lander may be a resolutely nuskool release – there's a DVD version available alongside the standard CD issue and both require a 3D accelerator card. Quite impressive and arguably the future of entertainment. Well yes, but the basic theme of the game – an exciting yet delicate tussle with the forces of gravity – has been around since the prehistoric era of video gaming. The most obvious influence is *Lunar Lander*, Atari's first vector title, which appeared way back in 1979, thereby pre-dating the legendary arcade classic

Asteroids by at least a few thousand minutes.

Despite its massive heritage, *Lunar Lander* wasn't the first game of this type – basic versions of the game, with ASCII characters for graphics, had been popular with US uber-nerds for years. In fact, if you were a *professional* dweeb – wide shirt collar, corduroy trousers, greasy hair, glasses, *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* sticker book and all – then you probably wrote your *own* version for a science fair project. And you won. But you never got to shag any cheerleaders. So in real terms, you lost.

Anyway, the underlying concept resurfaced intermittently for years – in games like *Gravitar* (again, another Atari arcade 'classic'), *Thrust* (a notoriously frustrating swear 'em up for the BBC Micro), and David Braben's *Virus* (which turned fiddly pig-headed control systems into something of an art form). Each of these games enjoyed relative success, but none of them really managed to make it into the mainstream. Like corduroy jackets with leather patches on the elbows they were still the preserve of faintly kooky teen-

boffins, overweight NASA groupies and curtain-twitching psychotics. Now, in 1998, *Lander* hopes to change all that. Or at least hopes to sell reasonably well. And here's why...

WHERE IT'S AT

First things first: *Lander's* graphics are shit-hot. Remember the sequence in *Aliens* where the troop carrier plummets through a tempest toward the surface of the creature-infested planet? It looks just like that. Convincing atmospheric effects, spectacular light-sourcing, ultra-smooth movement and moody ambient noise. A couple of years ago, you'd have assumed you were looking at an FMV intro sequence. Well, not any more.

Then there's the control system. Imagine having a jetpack. Now imagine taking off and trying to fly around. You'd have to continually 'thrust' with the jets to avoid breaking your legs on the ground. Now imagine attaching four jetpacks to a car and trying to fly that. Awkward, maybe – but a heck of a laugh once you get used to it. In the most basic terms *Lander* is a bit like that, only more so: Psygnosis claim it's 'very

"...very different to any game-based craft you've flown in the past ten years"

PSYGNOSIS SPOKESPERSON





Guess what's in the box and win £15,000. And a lake of molten gold. And a bike.



Look. Banbury, Oxfordshire. Pity you're not laden with bombs.



There goes a perfectly healthy set of eardrums.

different to any game-based craft you've flown in the past ten years", and they're right. Controlling the ship requires the use of the mouse *and* the keyboard simultaneously. People tell me it's a bit like flying a helicopter, suffice to say that just keeping the thing in the air is quite a challenge.

Finally, there's the gameplay itself. Once you've finally mastered the ship's controls, you've still got 40 different levels to explore, ranging from the aforementioned dark-planet-in-a-thunderstorm thang, to underground mines, to volcanic wastelands, to lush otherworldly

valleys. On top of this, there is also an abundance of missions for your gaming pleasure. Despite its title, a mere landing isn't the main objective: you've got objects to retrieve, puzzles to solve, and enemies to blast out of the sky (did we mention that your ship had lasers? We didn't? Ha ha!). All in all, more than enough to keep the most idle of hands occupied.

WHERE IT'S GOING

As previously mentioned, an interesting point about *Lander* is the release of a dedicated DVD version of the game. If you're not familiar with DVD and you're allergic to geekery, we'll just

describe it as a 'super' version of yer common-or-garden data CD. Basically, it enables programmers to store masses more information than ever before on a single disc, opening the doors for longer, more detailed FMV sequences, extra levels, music and other malarkey, and... oh, all kinds of other things. It's a good thing. Don't be afraid – trust us.

Lander is set to gingerly touch down on the computer game shelves of the nation some time later this year. Mankind's first inter-planetary war is scheduled for April 30th, 2238 AD. Plenty of time for practice, Mister Buck Rogers, sir. ☐

THE SPOD – ENGLISH DICTIONARY

If you're the kind of shambling geek who lives in a hive of cables and monitor screens, dreams in C++ and hasn't ventured outside for seven months, then Merry Christmas: this bit's for you. Oli Wright, *Lander's* lead programmer, is about to explain why this project makes his heart go zing in full-on 'Sensurround spod-o-vision'. For the benefit of our more *human* readers, we've interpreted his statements to the best of our ability – these appear in italics below.

ON THE VISUALS

"The graphics engine in *Lander* is almost entirely new (the API, FW, is an evolution of the one used in *Sentient*). FW on the PC can be built for Direct3D, Glide 3 and PowerSG 2. We're also including support for AMD's K6 3D."

Translation: *The programming code which produces the visuals is derived from the game Sentient, and supports lots of different 3D cards and standards.*

ON 'SPATIAL SUBDIVISION'

"Octrees are used throughout the game for spatial subdivision. We use them to describe distributions of static objects, zones, polygons and vertices. They're used in the collision, lighting and shadow projection systems."

Translation: *We have absolutely no idea what he's on about, but it's probably something to do with invisible, three-dimensional octagon-type things.*

ON THE CONTROL SYSTEM

"I won't go into detail about the control system, except to say the little manoeuvring thruster jets you can see on the Lander are all calculated correctly, with their impulses being applied through the motion dynamics system."

Translation: *It moves properly.*



The lander itself sort of reminds us of a voodoo doll (Eh? – Ed)

PRO 18: WORLD TOUR GOLF



Behind the scenes: O'Meara's crazed genetic experiments crosses putters with tribbles.

Another day, another golf game, another control method. Psygnosis attempt to introduce the most advanced swing system yet. **Paul Presley** is the man in the silly trousers



Female golfers. Long poles. Balls going in holes. There's a joke in here somewhere I'm sure... (yeah only in your pervy little mind - Ed).

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Intelligent Games
PUBLISHER Psygnosis
WEBSITE www.psygnosis.com
OUT November '98

In the history of golf game control methods there have been the good, the bad and the downright odd. Among the latter two categories, notable entrants are Empire's recent mouse swing thing from *The Golf Pro* and Ocean's unbelievably bad *International Open Golf*, which requires you to shoot the ball with a sort of sniper's rifle view that wobbles about in the wind like a leaf.

Thanks to the likes of EA Sports' *PGA Tour* series and the *Links* games, most right thinking people have accepted the three-click circular swing method as the *de facto* golfing control system (although it's an off-

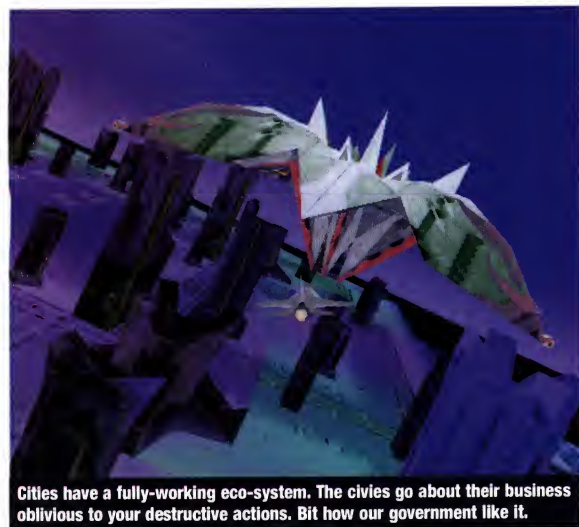
neglected fact that it was first originated in the ground-breaking *David Leadbetter's Golf*. But now we've got a new pretender to the crown - the four-clicker shot.

Intelligent Games, the crew behind *Pro 18: World Tour Golf*, comes to the arena with an extensive knowledge of PGA's ins, outs and pars having previously worked on several course disks for the popular series. For their first solo golfing effort, IG are taking what works from over there, then adding to it in ways that enhance the overall golfing nature, while still retaining the playability. Well that's the plan.

PRO'S A SWINGER

"*PGA Tour* and *Links LS* are both very good golf games," admits Steve Cuss, *Pro 18's* Project Director. "*Links* has the graphical edge but pays for it in speed. *PGA*, meanwhile, provides better atmosphere and is quicker, but it's

TELLURIAN DEFENCE



Cities have a fully-working eco-system. The civies go about their business oblivious to your destructive actions. Bit how our government like it.

Psygnosis combine alien invasions, Earth-bashing asteroids and sinister conspiracy theories in one all-action game. **Paul Presley** looks on in amazement

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Psygnosis, Liverpool
PUBLISHER Psygnosis
WEBSITE www.psygnosis.com
OUT September '98

Following one of those near-cataclysmic asteroid storms, the Earth is busy rebuilding its shattered cities and pulverised lands. Nations are all mucking in together for the good of mankind.

A phoenix is rising from the flames of destruction. A new era of peace and love and togetherness not seen since 'Thirty-something' went off air is blossoming. And thankfully, as yet, there's no sign of Bruce Willis. However, tranquillity is not to last as a hostile alien race, commonly known as the Greys, decide that now is the time to strike and set about invading our green and pleasant land, kidnapping our women and drawing obscene

alien doodles in our cornfields. Welcome to *Tellurian Defence* (in case you're wondering, it means 'of the Earth').

Luckily you just happen to be a member of a secret military defence unit that survived the apocalypse by, er, hiding. Taking to the air, you and your rather nifty little assault craft are all that stands between life and death. It might sound pretty standard fare up until now, but that's why Psygnosis have brought in none



Plenty of options are available to you, from foot stance to choice of drugs. Well almost.

not so good to look at. Also, in my opinion, it isn't particularly true to the game of golf."

Pro 18 is trying to remain true by giving you a swing system that closely mirrors a real life golfing swing. The backswing, the downstroke, the actual contact and the follow-through are all represented by a sort of skeletal arm that gives you far more control over each shot than ever before. You can also fine tune things even further by adjusting foot stance, opening or closing the face of your club, adding draw or fade (or hook and slice as we say in this country) and selecting the style of shot. "The interface is very important, especially the way you design and execute a shot," maintains Cuss. "In *Pro 18*, you don't have to play real golf to be good at the game, but if you do, the game will let you use that knowledge effectively."

Just for the record, you can play across three courses from three different continents: Royal County Down in Northern Ireland, Coeur D'Alene in Idaho and the

exotically-named Lost City in South Africa (parking is a bit of a bugger, I'm led to believe). All of which have been recreated with photo-quality realism and are packed with detail, from fluttering flags to realistic weather effects. Which is nice.

A LOAD OF OLD PROS

A great deal of attention is also being paid to each member of your opposition. Eight real-life players have been enlisted to provide not only graphical representations of themselves for you to play against, but also playing styles. World class golfers such as Colin Montgomerie, Ian Woosnam, Vijay Singh (the bloke in *Octopussy*), Jesper Parnevik (the guy with the silly hat) and recent British Open winner Mark O'Meara have all lent their expertise to the game, as has BBC stalwart Peter Alliss on the commentary side. This no doubt means we can expect lots of bizarre flights of fancy as he ignores your spectacular hole-in-one to pass comment on a nearby

seagull or how blue the skies are looking. So who was the best at pretending to hit a hole in one? "I think all of the pro golfers came along with some trepidation about having to 'act'," says Cuss of the recording sessions. "We started off with all the stuff they are really familiar with - their basic golf swings and so on. Then we got them into doing their reactions for holed chip shots and stuff. We played them crowd cheers to cue them and get them into mood and it was then that they started to relax and get into it."

From what we've seen so far, *Pro 18* is certainly looking like a real contender to the 'bit two' in the golfing world. All the options you could ask for in a golf game are there and beyond that it's hoping to offer a more enjoyable all round experience than its rivals. As Cuss explains: "I think *Pro 18* looks great. It has loads of television-style golf atmosphere, feels like professional tour golf and plays like professional tour golf." But then he would say that, wouldn't he? **PCZ**



Mark O'Meara celebrates another lucky victory. Hmmm.



Ah Mr Montgomerie. Some things never change. Shame.



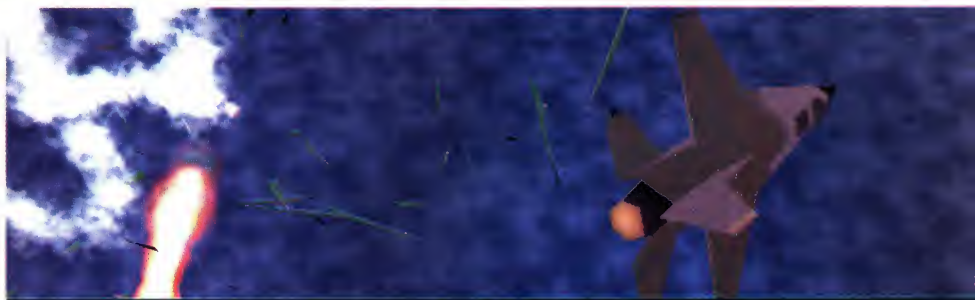
The housing estate was an interesting hazard, but didn't prove too many problems for the professionals.

other than Morgan Gendel, television scriptwriter-at-large to pen the missions and FMV scenes and generally spice the whole thing up. An alumni of such 'hit' shows as the Johnny Depp-vehicle *21 Jump Street* and the *Dirty Harry*-wannabe *Hunter*, Gendel is perhaps most renowned for penning the award-winning *Star Trek: The Next Generation* episode known among Trekkers to be 'The Inner Light'.

These carefully crafted missions take place in a fast-moving 3D world, covering scenarios such as jungles, deserts, snowy mountains, tight, twisty canyons, fully working cities and even underwater levels. You can fly at day or night and in all manner of weather conditions, from tornadoes to electrical storms, all of which show off the powerful 3D graphics engine to great effect.

You get to fly around it all in your own state-of-the-art fighter, sometimes ordering wingmen about as you try to fulfil certain pre-set objectives, from blowing everything up to only blowing certain things up. The strategy side of the game comes into play between missions where you are charged with allocating research teams to new technologies, weapons and vehicles. The aliens themselves take the classic bug-eyed appearance and have ships that vary from small fighters to huge mother (and, amusingly, 'grandmother') ships that dwarf cities and make the ones in *Independence Day* look like Frisbees. Thrown by dwarves.

It all sounds very deep and involving and if Gendel's script-writing skills translate effectively to games, we could be in store for a bit of a surprise hit come September. Here's hoping. **PCZ**



"You maniacs! You finally did it. You blew it up. Damn you. Damn you all to hell!"



The Millennium Dome takes on a sinister new appearance.



Bizarre alien ships and weapons abound.



You'll also be able to race against up to eight of your mates over a network.

All teams and drivers are based on last year's 1997 CART season. In addition the pit crew have been motion-captured for ultra realism.

The aggressive, accurately modelled drivers take into account such features as racing lines, drafting, tyre wear, fuel consumption and crash avoidance – which is nice.



Track side and car detail is pretty impressive, especially when you consider it's running at around 30 fps.



There are eleven accurately modelled tracks as well as four secret 'fantasy' tracks to race around.



You can get as involved as you like with car set-up or just stick with the default options.

NEWMAN HAAS RACING

When it comes to racing sims, we've really only had two choices. The graphically lush, but arcadey *F1 97* from Psygnosis and the now aged, but authentic *F1 GP2* from MicroProse. But that's all about to change with the release of *Newman Haas Racing* this October. **Jeremy Wells** investigates

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Studio 33
PUBLISHER Psygnosis
WEBSITE www.psygnosis.com
OUT October '98

Developed in association with the world famous Newman Haas racing team, (world famous in the US anyway), the aptly named *Newman Haas Racing* sim from Psygnosis is a fast paced, super slick racing sim that looks set to leave Formula One and IndyCar racing fans in a spin when it arrives this autumn.

Boasting super-detailed, high-resolution graphics and a blistering 30 frames per second frame rate, *Newman Haas Racing*

is a full-on racing sim based on the 1997 CART season. As well as being able to race around the 11 accurately modelled and officially licensed tracks (two ovals, four temporary street circuits and five permanent road tracks) you'll be able to pit your out-braking skills against the 16 drivers who participated in the 1997 CART season. Names that will include Newman Haas drivers; Christian Fittipaldi, Michael Andretti and even includes Britain's very own Mark Blundell.

Thanks to a complex new AI system, each and every driver will display their own particular personalities on the track and react realistically to other drivers' manoeuvres, crashes and debris. Speaking of which, lose it going

into a corner and you'll see first-hand how the dynamic car models will spin, flip and crumple before your eyes. This, combined with real engine sounds and samples taken from the Newman Haas IndyCar, extensive commentary from TV's Danny Sullivan and Bob Varsha and a variety of in-car and TV style camera views mean that *Newman Haas Racing* is heavy on the atmosphere and realism.

GETTING TO GRIPS

And just because it's realistic, it doesn't mean that the fun factor has to suffer. If you find you're getting lapped, you'll be able to toggle various driver aids, such as steering and braking to help you and if you really want to get your

hands dirty you can delve into the mysteries of tyre wear, gears, fuel consumption and car set-up (tyre pressures, suspension etc.) in an attempt to shave valuable seconds off your fastest lap times. If you're just finding it difficult enough staying on the track however, you can opt for a more driver-friendly 'arcade' style car model. Not that we're saying you're a crap driver or anything like that.

Novice drivers will also be able to start at amateur level and compete with slower, more forgiving drivers and use the training mode to learn the various circuits and experiment with different car set-ups. Once you're up to speed (ahem), you'll be able to compete in single races to

hone your skills and then take part in a full Championship season. There's also a special 'challenge' mode that involves completing four tracks of similar difficulty with pre-set parameters. Each challenge is designed to improve certain driving skills and depending on how well you compete, you'll be rewarded with entry to the next circuit. For example, less experienced drivers would opt for the easiest level which is based on the oval tracks, with no crashes, no damage and a front row start position. The hardest level will have damage, crashes, fuel consumption, pit stops and manual gears. In other words, it'll be rock hard!

So, come and have a go if you think you're hard enough!

COMING SOON!



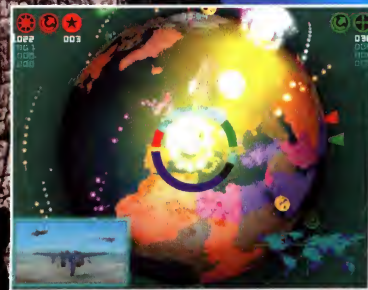
TELLURIAN DEFENCE
• September '98



O.D.T.
• October '98



NEWMAN HAAS RACING
• October '98



GLOBAL DOMINATION
• October '98



LANDER
• November '98



**PRO 18: WORLD
TOUR GOLF**
• November '98



**DRAKAN: ORDER OF
THE FLAME**
• January '99

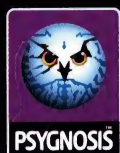
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DEFENCE



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- Supports **8 PLAYERS** over a LAN and **2 PLAYERS** via the internet



DOWNLOAD THE DEMO AT:

www.psygnosis.com

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